The A. F. of L. Weekly News Letter contains a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

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AGITATE!
EDUCATE!
ORGANIZE!

VOL. 8. NO. 38. WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1918. WHOLE NO. 402.

DOLLAR WORTH LESS; WAGES ARE NOT HIGH

Philadelphia, Dec. 14.—Wages are not high, when the purchasing power of the dollar is considered, said G. H. Sines, United States railroad administration, at a reconstruction conference held in this city under the auspices of the academy of political science.

The present wages of railroad workers, he said, while 50 per cent higher than heretofore, will not buy as much as former wages because prices have increased 65 per cent.

The forces of true democracy will resent any tendency to lower the standard of living, declared William F. Coburn, connected with the cost of living department of the national war labor board.

"Democracy, in the last analysis, means the right to choose one's standard of living," he said, "and a high or low standard of living means on the one hand death, destitution and a broken spirit, and on the other health, comfort, courage and a spirit of independence."

RIOTS EASILY STARTED SAY GERMAN ADHERENTS

Washington, Dec. 14.—At a senate committee hearing on German propaganda methods the government's secret service department submitted letters written by German agents in which were outlined plans to start Japanese race riots in California for the purpose of embroiling Japan and America.

The letters state that a well-known eastern detective agency has unearthed scandals concerning the police of San Francisco and other western cities. It is shown that these police departments could be forced to aid the rioting under threat of exposure.

The clergy were to be brought into the mix up by judiciously arranged insults of American women by Japanese men, through the ministers' love of seeing their names in print, a common failing of the clergy of the United States, the writer declared. This anti-Jap propaganda was to be carried on through films and plays designed to incense their audiences against everything Japanese.

A large amount of similar testimony was submitted, which should open the eyes of working men who are oblivious to methods employed to arouse a wicked mass sentiment.

IN PAY OF AUSTRIA.

Washington, Dec. 14.—Arthur Gabryel, former vice president of the American association of foreign language newspapers, swore before a senate investigating committee that it was an open secret among Poles in New York that Louis N. Hammerling, president of the association, was in the employ of the Austrian government in 1916. He said he had seen Count von Bernstorff, former German ambassador, in Hammerling's office, and shortly after, the witness stated, a campaign to insert in more than 400 newspapers of the country an appeal against shipments of arms to the allies was begun. Gabryel said he knew Bernstorff from having sat across the table from him on board a ship returning from Europe a short time before.

Trade unionists have an additional interest in this testimony because of Hammerling's activity against the Burnett immigration restriction law, which was passed by congress in 1915. At that time Hammerling was president of the association of foreign language newspapers. He was also associated with the national liberal immigration league, which was exposed by President Gompers. The A. F. of L. executive made public documents which showed that the league's campaign against immigration restriction was financed by large employers of labor, including steamship companies and steel and iron interests.

Hammerling was in the public eye at that time, and posed as an American who shuddered at the thought of refusing to extend democracy to the immigrants of the world, even though some of them would reduce living standards of American workers.

Now Hammerling is charged, by one of his business associates, with being in the pay of Austria, in an effort to perpetuate autocracy.

JOHN WILLIAMS RESIGNS.

Pittsburg, Pa., Dec. 14.—John Williams, president of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, has tendered his resignation to that body. He has been connected with the amalgamated offices for 22 years in the capacities of assistant secretary secretary-treasurer and president.

Pittsburg, Pa., Dec. 14.—Officers of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin workers report that locals have been formed in Coatesville, Pa.; Milwaukee, Wis., and Indiana Harbor, Ind.

WHY NOT TRY UNIONISM?

Boston, Dec. 14.—At a meeting of the state minimum wage commission and the retail stores wage board it was shown that firms in this state are refusing to comply with the wage awards of the commission and that the treat of publicity does not seem to have any terrors for these low-wage employers.

It was declared that firms are paying a wage too low to maintain their workers in health and decency and that at least $10 a week for experienced workers 19 years or over is necessary.

CARPENTERS ADVANCE.

Adamston, W. Va., Dec. 14.—Carpenters have advanced wages to 70 cents an hour.

Newark, N. J., Dec. 14.—An additional gain of 10 cents an hour has been secured by organized carpenters. The rate is now $6.40 a day with a one-year contract.

FAVOR LABOR PARTY.

Bloomington, Ill., Dec. 14.—The convention of the state federation of labor indorsed the proposed independent labor party suggested by the Chicago federation of labor.

The convention voted down a resolution against military training on the ground that the end of wars is not yet in sight.

SWITCHMEN UNITE.

Buffalo, N. Y., Dec. 14.—Officers of the Switchmen's Union of North America report the organization of lodges at Des Moines, Iowa, and Rochester, Pa.

SCHWAB LIKES UNIONS IF THEY'RE RUN RIGHT

Atlantic City, N. J., Dec. 14.—At the reconstruction conference of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America Charles M. Schwab of the Bethlehem Steel company said he believed in labor organizations—provided, of course, they are run right.

About the same time Mr. Schwab was orating President Grace of the Bethlehem Steel company was asking the national war labor board to withdraw its representatives from that plant and abandon a shop system of collective bargaining which the company, the employes and the war labor board agreed to.

Mr. Schwab favors the two-by-four shop union rather than unions linked up in huge national or international organizations.

"I believe," he said, "that labor should organize in individual plants or amongst themselves for the protection of their own rights, but the organization and control of labor in individual plants and manufactories, to our mind, ought to be representative of the people in those plants who know the conditions."

This should be sufficient notice to those ogres, known as business agents and walking delegates—who are always trying to foment discontent and start riots—that, as far as Mr. Schwab is concerned, they "needn't come 'round."

The speaker declared that "any foundation of organized labor" that is on a false basis must fail. Capital is included in this warning. The statement shows that Mr. Schwab is not partisan, but is broad minded, for the public is not supposed to make any distinction between capital and capitalists. In fact, the public is expected to put a steam dredge, a flour mill, a coke oven or a railroad system in the same class with human beings who depend upon the sale of their labor power for their daily bread.

Mr. Schwab also made this statement, which has so often been uttered by agitators and other undesirables:

"I seriously doubt that many times in the years gone by labor has received its fair share of the prosperity of this great country."

Mr. John D. Rockefeller, jr., spoke along the same lines. His contribution of generalities was well received.

POSTAL CHIEF HOLDS FAST.

Washington, Dec. 14.—In his annual report to congress Postmaster General Burleson reaffirms his opposition to unions in the postal service as expressed in his report last year.

The postmaster general says:

"The views of this department on organizations of postal employes were fully set forth in the last annual report of the postmaster general. Nothing has transpired during the past year to change the views."

Last year's views, which the postmaster general indorses, are:

"The conduct of these organizations at this time is incompatible with the principles of civil service and with good administration of the postal service. They are fast becoming a menace to public welfare, and should no longer be tolerated or condoned. It is earnestly recommended that the provision in the act of August 24, 1912 (giving employes the right to petition congress and to affiliate with the A. F. of L.), be repealed."

Regarding this attitude of the postmaster general, Secretary-Treasurer Flaherty, of the National Federation of Postal Employes, said:

"The postmaster general is the one prominent man in public and private life who has refused to change his opinion during the past year. No other citizen can be found who will say that the unions of government employes are a menace; but, like the boy in our school books, who stood on the burning deck, the postal chief stands alone."

COMPANY CAUSED WRECK.

New York, Dec. 14.—"I'll say now that the Brighton Beach line is the most recklessly run railroad of which I know," said District Attorney Lewis of Brooklyn in expressing his belief that the Brooklyn Rapid Transit company executives could be punished for responsibility for the wreck on the Brighton line on November 1 in which 89 lives were lost.

"To me it is a mystery that some disaster did not occur before November 1," said the district attorney. "The factors that made a wreck a certainty are rotten cars, a shortage of qualified men due entirely to the policies of the B. R. T.; poorly equipped road, and one, in part, poorly constructed."

The wreck occurred when union motormen suspended work beause the company refused to reinstate victimized trade unionists, on the order of the national war labor board. Strikebreakers were installed.

MINERS DEDICATE HOME.

Collinsville, Ill., Dec. 14.—The four unions of miners affiliated with the United Mine Workers have dedicated their new building, known as the Miners' Institute. It is three stories high, with every facility for union purposes, education, recreation and an auditorium that will accommodate the largest theatrical production. Over the entrance to the club room quarters are two life-size figures of miners and in the background is the seal of the United Mine Workers.

EIGHT HOURS IN ENGLAND.

London, England, Dec. 14.—A conference of government officials and representatives of the National Union of Railwaymen has agreed on an eight-hour day for these workers. Committees of both sides will review wages and other questions.

The railwaymen have been asking for improved conditions and several weeks ago notified the government that the no-strike truce, agreed to because of the war, was at an end.

CURFEW BELL WON'T RING.

New York, Dec. 14.—The curfew bell won't ring in this town because Mayor Hylan has vetoed an ordinance to make children keep off the streets after 9 p. m. or be incarcerated in the village lockup.

The mayor showed that if children under 16 years of age were found standing on the street near their own home on a hot summer evening after the proscribed hour they would be taken in charge by a policeman.

UNIONISTS START STORE.

Racine, Wis., Dec. 14.—Organized garment workers have started a store where they are employed.

A. F. OF L. RECONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE

Washington, Dec. 14.—The St. Paul convention of the American Federation of Labor adopted a resolution authorizing the executive council to appoint a committee for the purpose of making a study and investigation of the subject of reconstruction after the close of the war. Reconstruction of a practical character to deal with the problem in as comprehensive a manner as possible and to meet at least the immediate needs to emerge from an industrial life of a war basis to a peace footing.

President Gompers announced that in compliance with the above direction the executive council appointed the following representatives of labor as the committee:

John P. Frey, International Iron Molders' union.
A. O. Wharton, Railroad Employes' Department, A. F. of L.
John Moore, United Mine Workers of America.
G. W. Perkins, Cigarmakers' International union.
Matthew Woll, International Photo Engravers' union.

The reconstruction committee met and organized and laid the basis for the investigation and will at as early a date as possible, consistent with the importance of the duties devolved upon it, submit the report to the executive council, and when approved will be published broadcast.

It is confidently anticipated that the work of the committee will contribute much toward shedding light upon the problems and to make suggestions which shall meet the situation and will receive the hearty support of all who are vitally interested in this great subject.

BETHLEHEM PLANNED TO IGNORE CONTRACT

Washington, Dec. 14.—While Charles M. Schwab of, the Bethlehem Steel company was assuring business men at an Atlantic City reconstruction meeting that he favored labor unions —of a certain variety—President Grace of the same company was asking the national war labor board to release it from an agreement which would establish collective bargaining in the Bethlehem plant.

The request was refused by Joint Chairmen Taft and Manly in a letter which says:

"You (Grace) personally agreed to the installation of a system of collective bargaining satisfactory to the board and under the supervision of the board's examiners. You now wish to repudiate that system of collective bargaining and ask that the board's examiners be withdrawn.

"Your company asked and received the assistance of the board in securing increased compensation from the war and navy departments to meet whatever increases in wages that were brought about by the board's award.

"The findings of the board do not require that you continue in your employment any man whose services are no longer needed because of the cancellation of war contracts. The board, however, does require that you carry out, in good faith, the findings of the board upon the basis of which your employes consented to remain at work and thus maintain the production and the profits of your company.

"This is a question of the good faith of your company and of the government itself. If the award of the board should now be repudiated your workmen would have every right to feel that they have been deceived and grossly imposed upon by your company, by the war labor board and by the other officials of the government who prevailed upon them to remain at work on the assurance that they would be justly dealt with.

"We must, therefore, insist that the machinery of collective bargaining, already established, be maintained and permitted to function, and that the other findings of the board be carried out fully and promptly."

OPPOSE GENERAL STRIKE.

Washington, Dec. 14.—Secretary of Labor Wilson has appealed to the workers of the country not to engage in a nation-wide strike as a protest in the case of Thomas J. Mooney. The secretary said that if the evidence now available is sufficient to convince a jury that "there has been a conspiracy to convict Mooney, there is every probability that he will secure a new trial and have his guilt or innocence determined by a jury in the light of the facts now known to exist."

The secretary of labor declared that the only effect of a strike "would bring into disrepute and tend to destroy the jury system of trial, which is the result of a thousand years' struggle on the part of the masses to protect themselves against criminals on the one hand and profiteering on the other."

"If Mooney has been guilty of this crime," continued the cabinet official, "labor is not interested in protecting him. If he is innocent, all of our people are interested in his acquittal. No strike of the workers of the country can facilitate these processes. It cannot produce a particle of evidence that would be helpful in securing justice. A strike can neither give a fair trial to nor secure a fair trial for Mooney and I sincerely hope that no such strike will take place."

VICIOUS SPEED-UP SYSTEM.

Chicago, Dec. 14.—At a meeting of the Chicago federation of labor one delegate called attention to a vicious speed up system employed by the Pullman Car company.

"They put the check and watch system on every employe in their great works," said the trade unionist. "They put the stop watch on the most able-bodied man in their employ, set him up as an example and then expect all the others to keep step with him. In this way they destroy the very life and soul of the weaker members. They have a checker over every action of the hand. They have a pension system so that after you have worked in the Pullman shops 20 years you are given $10 to $12 a month when you reach your sixty-fifth year. So, as not to lose out on this pension old and decrepit persons stand for all sorts of indignities."

DEBASING WORK FOR WOMEN

Chicago, Dec. 14.—The Coopers' International Journal makes this statement on evidence submitted to the national war labor board regarding the employment of women in cooper shops in this city:

"To pile staves and finished cooperage, operate dangerous machinery, wheel heavy loaded trucks, labor 55 hours a week for 25 cents an hour, clothe themselves behind barrel piles instead of modest secluded dressing rooms, deprived of resting periods, decent toilets, wash rooms and comfortable work shops in winter, together with lynx-eyed straw bosses hovering around them to keep speed up, gives a hunch that other kaisers are due for a bump."

HEAR JOINT PLEAS ONLY.

Washington, Dec. 14. — The national war labor board has given notice that hereafter it will only consider cases in which the parties agree to joint submission. Heretofore the board acted on the single plea of either the employer or employed.

This decision does not affect cases now under consideration by the board.

BUILDING LABORERS GAIN.

Kansas City, Mo., Dec. 14.—Organized building laborers have raised wages to 52 1-2 cents an hour, starting the first of the year.

BASIC EIGHT-HOUR DAY WON'T SATISFY LABOR

Washington, Dec. 14.—A basic eight-hour day does not establish the shorter work day, says President Gompers, writing in the American Federationist on the acceptance of the basic eight-hour day by the steel trust.

"The A. F. of L. and a number of its affiliated international unions had under way a campaign of organization among the steel workers to end the industrial autocracy of the steel corporation," says President Gompers. "It was to be expected that some counter move would be made. The announcement of a basic eight-hour day was a counter move.

"Some two months have passed since the announcement was made by Judge Gary. If there was any doubt then about what the basic eight-hour day meant in the steel industry, there is none now. It meant and means a basis for figuring wages—and it can be manipulated to suit steel corporation requirements until the workers in the steel industry organize sufficiently to exercise an influence in the ordering of their lives.

"When labor speaks of the eight-hour day it means a work day of eight hours' duration. It means an actual eight-hour day. It is that kind of an eight-hour day that organized labor is striving for, not only in the steel industry, but in every industry in which it has not already been secured.

The campaign of organization among the steel workers will continue. The movement will go on. No specious pleas, no diplomatic announcements, will stop it. The time required to organize and free the steel workers of America may be long, or it may be short. But, soon or late, it will be done. All things move toward freedom today. All men, all elements, move toward liberty. All society moves toward greater consideration for humanity. The steel mills must go the way the world goes, toward liberty!"

MEDIATION WITH A STRING.

Reading, Pa., Dec. 14.—At a hearing on differences between the Carpenter Steel company and its organized workers, the attorney for the workers asked the company if it will abide unreservedly by the decision of the war labor board. Counsel for the company objected to this question and was sustained.

The workers are asking for wage adjustments, abolition of the bonus system, eight-hour day, equal pay regardless of sex and better sanitation. Amalgamated Association of Iron, Tin and Steel Workers' local No. 99 is conducting the fight for the workers, who number aproximately 2,000.

The workers complain that no washing facilities are afforded the men; that the women get but 15 minutes at lunch time, some of the women having a five-minutes' walk to the lunch or rest room, leaving them only five minutes actual time to eat their luncheon; that union petitions are thrown into waste paper baskets and that active union members are discharged.

The company's labor troubles began in August and on September 12 over 1,200 employes walked out. They returned to work a few days later on an agreement to let the war labor board act on the case.

PHONE CO. SCORED.

Portland, Ore., Dec. 14.—The state public service commission has ordered the local telephone company to employ a sufficient number of skilled operators that its service may be improved. The company is charged with discrimination against members of the Telephone Operators' union, and a refusal to hire these skilled workers, it is stated, is largely the cause of present unsatisfactory service.

"These trained operators," it is stated, "have not been called nor employed, even during the past months of public clamor for better service, although the company was continuously and extensively advertising for operators, requesting the public to limit its use of the service to essential conversation, using many inexperienced girls at responsible positions on the boards, and at the same time contributing further to the demoralization of service by allowing positions to remain vacant."

CONSTITUTION OUTWORN.

Philadelphia, Dec. 14.—"The state constitution, adopted in 1874, has outlived its usefulness," said James Alcorn, public service commissioner and former city solicitor.

"It would require so many alterations and amendments to conform it to present conditions," he said, "that very much confusion would arise in giving the proper interpretations to its provisions. Changes that are now necessary are hardly capable of being provided by amendments. It would be much better to have a convention to formulate a new constitution."

URGE SOCIAL INSURANCE.

New York, Dec. 14.—Social workers from all parts of the United States, gathered here to consider problems arising from demobilization of the nation's armed forces, adopted a resolution calling on the government "for avoidance of the evils of the pension system for our victorious troops and of preventable poverty among wage earners."

Further extension "of the social insurance principle already adopted in soldiers' and sailors' insurance and in workmen's compensation laws" was suggested as a remedy.

WANT MOBBERS PUNISHED.

Jackson, Mich., Dec. 14.—At one of the largest mass meetings held this year trade unionists and other citizens asked federal officials to initiate an investigation of the mobbing of Herbert Crawford, organizer of the Machinists' union, who was tarred and feathered by a posse led by officers of the state constabulary.

LONG UNION CAMPAIGN SUCCEEDS IN ENGLAND

Manchester, England, Dec. 14.—The Weavers' association at Skipton, near here, has succeeded in the unionization of shops over which it claims jurisdiction after an 18-months' campaign that has attracted attention because of its persistence and the policy of reaching individuals, rather than striking.

As a result of this campaign the union has secured an agreement with the manufacturers, who will hereafter employ only organized weavers. No person shall be employed as a substitute for longer than 14 days without becoming a member of the union.

Officers of the union print this story of their campaign in the Cotton Factory Times:

"The system adopted was to select one firm at a time, secure the names and addresses of all the weavers, sort out the members from the non-members, and then canvass the non-members. Whenever we came across an obstinate person, and generally this happened when the non-unionists had been reduced to one or two, we sought the help of the employer and got it. By these means we persuaded all the weavers in nine firms to become trade unionists.

"Suddenly we found ourselves up against a manager who believed in the 'freedom of the subject,' and he refused to help us in any way, although at this firm there was only one non-unionist. This is eight months ago. From that time onwards, and up to Saturday last, we have never ceased our efforts to get this person (who is a woman) to join. We have had three shop meetings, two interviews with the firm, three interviews with the woman and her parents, four joint meetings with the employers, and innumerable federation meetings, and all to no avail as far as this person was concerned. It was finally decided that notices should be tendered, and these were all signed and ready. A meeting with the employers on the Monday when notices should be tendered was arranged, and again the old ground was gone over, with the result noted above."

PRINTERS RAISE WAGES.

New York, Dec. 14.—At the request of President Rouse of Typographical union No. 6, the national war labor board has amended its wage increase of $3.60 a week for members of the union employed in commercial shops operated by the members of the association of employing printers.

The amended award adds $2.40 a week, making a total increase of $6 a week. The rates are now $36 a week for day work, $39 a week for night and $42 a week for work starting around midnight and to consist of six and one-half hours. From time immemorial wages of commercial printers have been lower than on newspapers but the award has created a new condition by establishing a wage of $1.50 a week on each rate higher than newspapers.

The national war labor board also ruled that the $6 increase should apply to Printing Pressmen's union No. 51.

St. Paul, Minn., Dec. 14.—Arbitration methods have secured newspaper wage increases for Typographical union No. 30, dating back to last May. Rates are now $29.24 a week for day work and $32.48 a week for night work with an additional $1 a week as a war bonus, to continue until May, 1921, when the contract expires.

GIRLS WERE JUST "INVITED."

Hartford, Conn., Dec. 14.—At a hearing before the public welfare commission on compulsory health insurance, old age pensions and a minimum wage, one of the commissioners asked Attorney Goodhart, representing the manufacturers, if the latter do not oppose every progressive labor law.

"Certainly not," answered the attorney.

"How about the buffers and polishers' bill?" asked the commissioner.

The attorney stated that at a hearing on that bill at the last session of the legislature "three fine, healthy, robust young girls appeared before the committee in opposition to the bill."

"Did they appear voluntarily, or were they sent there?" was asked.

"They might have been invited, but they were not compelled to appear," replied the attorney.

HAS LABOR SECRETARY.

New York, Dec. 14.—Peter W. Collins has been appointed labor secretary for the league to enforce peace. A campaign will be conducted among workers in behalf of the theory of the league—that a combination of the nations of the world, by pooling their forces, can end wars.

The appointee was for eight years secretary of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and editor of the official magazine of that organization.

MILK WAGON DRIVERS WIN.

Indianapolis, Dec. 14.—President Tobin, of the Brotherhood of Teamsters, calls attention to gains made by organized milk wagon drivers of Cleveland, Ohio, who have just secured a union shop agreement and wage increases. This was made possible by organization, which includes the drivers, bottle and milk checkers, all barn men and wagon washers.

BARBERS WANT MORE.

St. Paul, Minn., Dec. 14.—The Barbers' union has prepared a new wage rate which calls for a weekly minimum of $21 and 60 per cent of receipts above $30 a week.

SCHOOL JANITORS UNITE.

Portland, Ore., Dec. 14. — School house janitors in this city have organized and are chartered by the A. F. of L.

KEEP WOMEN IN SHOPS SAYS WOMAN OFFICIAL

Washington, Dec. 14.—Miss Mary Van Kleck, director of the woman in industry service, department of labor, sees no reason why women should not continue in machine shops and other industrial plants. Writing in the United States Employment Service Bulletin, she says:

"The problem is not the withdrawal of any group of workers voluntarily but rather the organization of industry in such a way as to utilise to the full all of the available working forces of the country. Who can doubt that the enormous work of reconstruction will demand the activity of every man and woman capable of taking part in the production needed, not only for the United States, but for the countries of Europe?

"For women in industry the chief danger is that they will remain in certain industries or be introduced into new ones at a lower wage scale than is paid to the men. It is time to establish wages on the basis of the occupation and not on the basis of sex.

"The woman in industry service recognizes that this and other problems of women in industry, which have been familiar before the war, will be accentuated during the reconstruction period. These include dangers to health from unsanitary working conditions and hazardous occupations, inadequate opportunities for training and limited chances to be advanced to more responsible work in many industries, and the dangers to health involved in long hours and employment at night. These conditions and the payment of a distinctly lower wage in women's occupations than in men's work have always been a check upon the rendering of the most efficient service by women workers. The war has demonstrated that the range of possibilities for efficiency by women in industry is much larger than has been assumed in the past. This is notably illustrated in the work of women in machine processes."

SUGGEST AFTER-WAR PLAN.

Ottawa, Canada, Dec. 14.—For the first time in the history of Canada representatives of organized labor, organized capitalists and of technical organizations have agreed upon a policy to be recommended to the government.

These recommendations deal with matters to be carried out in connection with the reconstruction period.

The plan suggests in a general way the appointment of a bureau of public welfare; the establishment of a bureau to take a survey of imports: the refining and manufacturing in Canada of raw materials; scientific research; establishment of a central empire; authority on immigration; the immediate commencement of public works; co-operation with the provinces in the matter of technical education; an aggressive land settlement policy; establishment of employment bureaus; greater utilization and development of Canadian water powers; co-operation between the militia department and the government employment bureaus in the problems of demobilization, and the commencement of an "optimism campaign" in which the newspapers of the country will be asked to assist.

FLU TOLL IS HEAVY.

New York, Dec. 14.—At a meeting of presidents of life insurance companies one official stated that from a study of statistics he has reached a general impression that deaths resulting from the Spanish influenza epidemic in this country totaled in the neighborhood of 400,000, which, he said, meant an economic loss of 10,000,000 years.

The average age at death of all the cases submitted was 33 years. "This new form of influenza," it was stated, "has been taking the young and vigorous—those whom we expected to undertake much of the world's work. We may say that there is an average economic loss of about 25 years of active life in the case of each of the thousands of deaths from influenza. In the 1889-91 epidemic of influenza the old and feeble seemed most liable to succumb. This condition does not seem to hold now and millions of the best years of life have been stolen by this scourge."

WANT 44-HOUR WEEK.

New York, Dec. 14.—The International Fur Workers' union asks for an eight-hour day and half a day on Saturday.

The Fur Worker, official magazine of this organization, says:

"A 44-hour working week is no new issue with the furriers. Two years ago, before the present agreement was signed, our members expressed the wish that the union shall make it its business to agitate for a 44-hour week and exert every effort to have it established in the fur industry."

STREET CAR MEN GAIN.

Boston, Dec. 14.—Wage increases for employes of the Bay State Street railway, operating in eastern Massachusetts, have been awarded by the national war labor board. The order, fixing a scale varying from 41 to 45 cents an hour for motormen and conductors and giving an approximate increase of 10 per cent to other employes, is retroactive to October 22.

STRIKE TO ENFORCE RIGHTS.

St. Paul, Minn., Dec. 14.—Employes of the White Enamel Refrigerator company have suspended work to enforce their right to join a trade union.

FIREMEN ORGANIZE.

North Platte, Neb., Dec. 14.—Stationary firemen at this place have organized and affiliated with the trade union movement.

PAINTERS RAISE WAGES.

Newark, N. J., Dec. 14.—Painters in this city have established their new wage scale, which raises rates from $5 to $5.50 a day.

Women As Street Car Conductors Is "Squaw Work," Say Unionists

Cleveland, Ohio, Dec. 14.—The strike of street car men against the Cleveland Railway company, because of the employment of women conductors, has ended by the company's promise to the union that it will release the women as fast as possible and that none will be employed after March 1, next.

This controversy has been taken advantage of by sensationalists, sentimentalists, anti-unionists and low-wage advocates, who have shed oceans of tears over a "denial of women's rights." The street car men have stood as adamant against this plea, which they contemptuously refer to as "efforts to drive women into complete squawdom."

Last August the company installed women conductors on the ground that the war had produced a shortage of male workers. The men denied this claim and threatened to strike, but both sides agreed to refer the matter to the United States department of labor and accept the award. Two investigators—a man and a woman—appointed by the department, made a survey of the labor situation in this city and decided against the company.

"We have found," the report stated, "that the situation obtaining in Cleveland does not demand the employment of women on the cars of the Cleveland Railway company, and therefore decide that no woman should be employed on the cars of the company after November 1, 1918.

"No special inducements of any kind have been offered to men. On the contrary, special consideration shown women applicants has deterred men from applying to some extent, and induced others to quit the service of the company. If male applicants will be allowed a remuneration for the 10-day training period and schools of instruction, which have proved a success with women applicants, will be introduced for men, and the company's employment agent will make a more determined effort to recruit men from the fair labor market in Cleveland, there is no reason why the shortage should not be filled with men."

The company repudiated its agreement to accept the award of the department of labor and the men suspended work. Then representatives of the women conductors, with a woman lawyer, whom the strikers charge was furnished by the company, journeyed to Washington and asked the national war labor board to force the men back to work and rule that they were entitled to hold their positions. The women alleged that the investigation of the department of labor was not "fair."

The war labor board devoted a day to the hearing. The strikers showed, by reports of the city employment agency and the company's employment bureau, that the claim of a shortage of male labor was not true and that the company, therefore, had lost the one prop to support its case. On the broader question of whether this work is suitable for women, the strikers registered vigorous dissent. James H. Vahey, of Boston, attorney for the unionists, declared that street car work is not for women. He called attention to a report by a Brooklyn (N. Y.) grand jury that frightful immoralities had resulted by reason of the employment of women by the Brooklyn Rapid Transit company and that they would punish the company if they had the power.

The war labor board decided against the women, sustaining the department of labor.

The day after the board announced its decision the company realized the folly of attempting to break the strikers' lines and made a settlement with President Mahon of the Amalgamated Association of Street Car Men and Electric Railway Employes.

STREET CAR MEN UNDERPAID.

Washington, Dec. 14.—In the course of a hearing on a street railway case, Joint Chairman Taft of the national war labor board said:

"Mr. Walsh and I have had a great deal of experience in fixing these wages, and while, of course, we have made mistakes in the past we are only too glad to admit it. If possibly we fix too low a rate or too high a rate—too high for the conditions of the company and too low for the real exigencies under which the men have worked—there is this to be said, that the street railway men ought to realize that; but I think we have the right to say that we have found them underpaid everywhere. We found that they had been underpaid by reason of a situation in the public service companies that had pressed them down to something that was quite unjust, and the general usage of our rulings has been to bring them up, quite beyond, probably, what they would have been had our board not been instituted and that has brought about a financial situation in the companies that is deplorable, but that does not make us feel that we are at all departing from equity in what we have done in the raising of these wages, for the reason that the low wages for the men have been the result of an unsound economic policy which the street railways have got to reform or go to the wall."

PAPER STRIKE WON.

Marinette, Wis., Dec. 14.—Paper mill workers have won their three-weeks' strike for improved working conditions. The company had refused to answer requests for betterments until its plant was tied up. Wages are advanced 7 per cent and the girls will be paid 30 cents an hour. Complaints will hereafter be considered by the management and a committee of the workers.

The Union Laborer makes this comment on the strike:

"The strike should be an example to all the workers of what can be accomplished by organization of workmen. Never before in this section have workers been known to secure wage increases at this period of the year, nor is there any record of a wage increase at a time equal to that just negotiated. It is well known that in the past, at this time of the year, wages were usually reduced. This not only applies to the paper mills, but as well as to other industries and is clearly because of the previous unorganized state of the workers."

ARE WAGES HIGH?

Cincinnati, Dec. 14.—The official journal of the Metal Polishers' International union prints this statement relative to high-wage claims:

"The United States shipping board emergency fleet corporation says there are approximately 386,000 employes in the ship yards. The weekly pay roll is $10,500,000. Making proper allowance for salaried officials, this figures out an average to workmen of about $4 a day. Collier's Weekly says this equals about $2.70 a day before the war. And this means that American workmen are plugging away doing their level best for the country on just an average wage.

"We commend these figures to certain gentlemen who have been indulging in the fine art of profiteering at the expense of the men and women who are making the munitions and building the ships."

"REFUSE TO ARBITRATE."

Newark, N. J., Dec. 14.—The familiar "nothing-to-arbitrate" attitude was assumed by the Employers' association at a hearing conducted by the national war labor board in the case of the machinists and their employers who have been engaged in government work.

The employers informed the government's representative that they would not submit to arbitration. The machinists have agreed to abide by any decision the war labor board may make.

NEW YORK WAGE GAINS.

New York, Dec. 14.—The national war labor board has ordered these wage increases for printing industry unions:

Job Press Feeders' union No. 1, $2 a week over rates in effect September 16; Bindery Women's union No. 43, $2.50 a week over rates in effect October 21; Paper Cutters' union No. 119, $3 a week over rates in effect October 21; Paper Handlers and Sheet Straighteners' union, $2 a week over rates in effect October 21.

14 DIE IN EXPLOSION.

Pompton Lakes, N. J., Dec. 14.—Fourteen men were killed and a score injured, some of them seriously, as the result of an explosion at the du Pont powder plant here.

ELECT MEDIATION BOARD.

Bethlehem, Pa., Dec. 14.—Organized labor has selected the three workers' representatives on the Bethlehem board of conciliation which will act on disputes between the employes of the Bethlehem Steel company and the management, in accordance with the award of the national war labor board.

The three members are: A. F. of L. Organizer, Duffy, Business Agent Williams of the Machinsts' union and Joseph H. McGee, postmaster of South Bethlehem. The election of the latter is the workers' recognition of his stand for justice in their strike of 1910 when it was decidedly unpopular in this vicinity to be known as a friend of organized labor. The workers have not forgotten McGee's brave stand at that time.

The selection was made by a convention of delegates elected by the various departments of the big plant. All trade union delegates wore a red, white and blue badge. These badges were on the coat lapel of almost every delegate and was a testimonial to the increased strength of organized labor in Bethlehem within the past several months. The convention was called to order by a representative of the national war labor board, who is charged with the work of enforcing the board's award.

On the same day that the convention was held President Grace of the Bethlehem Steel company asked the national war labor board to withdraw its examiner from his plant. This request was denied by Joint Chairmen Taft and Manly, who notified Grace:

"You personally agreed to the installation of a system of collective bargaining satisfactory to the board and under the supervision of the board's examiners. This is a question of the good faith of your company and of the government itself."

WANT RAILROADS RETURNED.

New York, Dec. 14.—At a meeting of 200 railroad executives, representing 90 per cent of the railroads of this country, it was voted to ask the government to release the railroads now under federal control and establish a more "progressive control" than existed before the war.

While the resolutions make no specific mention of the roads' attitude toward labor, this question was discussed. A majority of the executives, it was stated, agreed with Director General of Railroads' McAdoo's recent statement that the limit of wage increases for railroad employes has been reached.

A committee was appointed to urge the return of the roads to private ownership and assist congress in passing legislation that will permit of a more extended regulation by the government than existed before the war, but at the same time permitting the properties to remain under private control.

WANT SOLDIERS TO SCAB.

Omaha, Neb., Dec. 14.—The Omaha and Council Bluffs Street Railway company insists on democracy abroad but wants the soldiers who made this possible to scab on workers who are fighting for industrial freedom at home.

The company's motormen and conductors are on strike and the following advertisement was inserted in local newspapers by this corporation: "Wanted able-bodied men who can operate street cars for positions as conductors and motormen. Returning soldiers will be given preference. Wages 41 to 45 cents per hour and bonus of 5c per day during the present emergency. Steady positions. Apply at superintendent of transportation, Omaha and Council Bluffs Street Railway company."

MANY SMALL INCOMES.

Washington, Dec. 14.—The annual report of Commissioner of Internal Revenue Roper shows that during the last fiscal year 2,319,329 persons reported incomes of $3,000 and less, which netted a revenue of $22,335,362.40, or a little less than $10 each.

On the other hand 665,000 individuals with incomes of more than $3,000 were assessed $591,818,908, or approximately $900 each.

WANT STATE COSSACKS.

Columbus, Ohio, Dec. 14.—The state cossack agitation has struck Ohio and friends of this strikebreaking institution are trying to win support in the farming communities by showing that the state cossacks will make crime in the rural sections as scarce as palm trees in the frozen north.

TO PROBE CHILD LABOR.

Augusta, Ga., Dec. 14.—The federation of trades will investigate the question of child labor in this city. It is charged that children between 7 and 12 years old are being employed.